

Frequently Asked Questions on Pay-for-Performance Preliminary Data

September 20, 2012

The following are the Frequently Asked Questions we typed up from the Department's conference call with school district superintendents on September 20, 2012. If you have additional questions, please let us know. Please note that pay-for-performance is also referenced as "PFP" in this document.

What is the current timeline for distributing pay-for-performance funding?

Here is the current timeline the State Department of Education has in place for calculating and verifying pay-for-performance data and distributing it to local school districts and public charter schools. Please remember this initial timeline was pushed back slightly because the State Department of Education extended the appeals window for student achievement data this summer from the end of July into the middle of August.

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| Sept. 19, 2012: | Preliminary statewide pay-for-performance data released to local school districts for review. |
| Sept. 20, 2012: | Conference call with school districts. |
| Sept. 19-Oct. 19, 2012: | The deadline for districts to review and appeal the preliminary statewide pay for-performance data. |
| Oct. 19-Oct. 29, 2012: | The State Department of Education will collect all appeals and re calculate statewide pay-for-performance data as necessary. |
| Oct. 29-Nov. 9, 2012: | The State Department of Education will provide a process for local school districts to submit their local pay-for-performance data from 2011-12 to the state to be incorporated into the statewide data. |
| Nov. 9-Nov. 12, 2012: | The State Department of Education Public School Finance Office will finalize all state and local pay-for-performance data and provide the final figures to the SDE Accounting Office to process a payment to local school districts. |
| Nov. 15, 2012: | The State Department of Education will distribute pay-for-performance funding to local school districts in the third foundation payment. |
| Nov. 15-Dec. 15, 2012: | Local school districts and public charter schools will distribute pay-for performance bonuses to teachers. |

During the conference call with superintendents, Deputy Chief of Staff Jason Hancock reviewed a few things every superintendent or district administrator should keep in mind as they review the preliminary pay-for-performance data. Here is a summary of Jason's remarks:

There are a few things that we want you guys to all pay particular attention to, as you're going through and reviewing your data.

- First, there are a number of different schools and programs out there where we don't have ISAT scores associated with that school. It might be because it's a k-2 primary school or a kindergarten-only school. Or maybe a Pre-k program where the ISAT is not administered. Or it might be a professional-technical program that you have that's at another site where the students may go there for part of the day. And so, in these cases, because this system is set up to allow everybody to participate, we call these "feeder schools" and "affiliate schools." For a feeder school, what we have done, and what the law directs us to do, is to show what school those K-2 students feed into, and then the teacher of that K-2 program will participate in pay-for-performance with the scores of the school that their students are feeding into. The affiliate school relationship would be like a professional technical program or something like that where we affiliate the teachers in that program with the high school or high schools in the district where the students are coming from to take those courses. We have this all programmed into the system, and what will happen is that the staff at those feeder schools and affiliate schools and programs will show up in the schools that they feed into. So, when you go to click on that 3-5 school, you'll see the K-2 teachers in there. We want you to check and make sure that we have those feeder and affiliate schools associated with the right buildings. We just need you to check that because this is something we worked with districts on back in the spring. However, it may be that there was something that we didn't catch back then or maybe something has changed since we did the dry run. So please check that and make sure we've got it right if you've got feeder schools and affiliate schools.
- Second, we want you to make sure all your certificated instructional staff have assignment codes in the system that allow them to participate. We want to make sure that your certificated instructional employees all show up somewhere. If they're not showing up somewhere, then it may be that they still have an assignment code that is associated with the district office, or something like that. We want you to identify those teachers, and give them assignment codes that allow them to participate. For example, if they are an instructional coach and work with multiple schools, give them assignment codes that allow them participate with those schools they serve.
- Third, we also want to make sure we have got the principals and assistant principals associated with the right buildings.
- Fourth, we want you to pay attention to the FTE status for each of these participating employees and make sure it is right—both in total and by school. We have a number of different people out there who serve multiple buildings, and so you should be able to see a piece of the FTE in these different buildings that they serve. You can look at it by school; you can look at it by employee. When you look at it by employee, you can check and see if we have the FTE status right for that person in total, and then when you go and look at it by school you can see if we have it right by school.

Are schools and districts able to appeal student achievement data or AYP data during this appeals window?

No. The Department already held had a process for appeals on ISAT scores and extended that window this summer. The current appeals window for preliminary pay-for-performance data is to appeal things like how we apply that data to staffing at the local level, FTE status and things like that.

Q: Two of the K-3 elementary schools in my district feed into an intermediate school for pay-for-performance. Both schools scored in the second quartile for excellence. Does this generate PFP pay separate from the intermediate school to which they are linked?

A: A K-3 school would generate state shares based on how it performs on the excellence measure because the state has 3rd grade scores for that school. For the growth calculation, because we have to measure from one grade to another, a K-3 school would be considered a “feeder school.” The school will earn whatever state growth shares were earned by the intermediate schools that school feeds into. Here is how that will work: Look at how the intermediate school performed for growth, and what quartile it is in and how many state shares it earned. That is how many state shares the K-3 feeder school would earn on the growth measure. Now, how much that school earns in total state shares will be the combination of the two. We add the two together and round it down to one, if it happens to be more than one when you add the two together. The school will earn excellence shares in its own right, and will be a feeder school for growth.

Q: How many total schools are included in the rankings?

A: 694 schools

Q: What data will school districts submit to the state during the window from Oct. 29th to Nov. 9th when districts are asked to submit local PFP data?

A: When districts submitted information on local student achievement goals to the Department on Sept. 1, 2011, that was the district’s plan. The majority of districts and charter schools submitted plans. About one-third chose to default to the state plan. For those districts that defaulted to the state plan, once we’re able to finalize the state data here in late October/early November, we will have your local performance data as well because they are one and the same. But for the two-thirds of the districts that developed local plans, those districts will use the Oct. 29 – Nov. 9th time period to submit their data on local shares to the Department. This will tell us how your teachers actually performed on your local plan. We will need you to submit information similar to: Did Mrs. Smith earn a full share, or did she earn $\frac{1}{4}$ of a share, or did she earn no local share? Once you’ve submitted that data to the Department, through an application we have developed, our system will calculate the total share data for you. This is the last step you must take in figuring out the amount for each individual’s bonus.

Q: Assigning district-wide certificated staff who work with all school to individual schools seems arbitrary and unfair. Is there any way in which they can be handled similarly to the process that is being proposed for district administrators?

A: We would have to change the law in order to handle district-wide certificated staff in that way. The reason for this system is because the bonuses will be based on the performance of the school buildings in which these instructional employees work. However, if districts would rather district-wide certificated staff be handled in a different way, it is definitely something we could explore, changing in the law in the future.

Q: Where did the Department get the staffing data to use in PFP calculations?

A: The State Department of Education used the May 2012 upload in ISEE. If there are things you find in that upload that is now in this data and is incorrect, that is the upload you will need to correct.

Q: Are athletic directors eligible?

A: Athletic directors are not eligible as athletic directors. That’s an administrative position. If your AD is also a teacher, which is the case in many districts, they are eligible as a teacher, but would not be eligible in their capacity as an athletic director.

Q: Are principals included in the district shares?

A: Yes. Principals earn state shares, and they can also earn local shares according to whatever your local plan says.

Q: Who should I contact if I have questions about a school's SGP, or Student Growth Percentile?

A: You will need to contact the Department's Assessment staff, such as Carissa Miller or Nick Smith in Federal Programs.

Q: Does the \$38.8 million appropriation from the state include the funding for the local portion of PFP bonuses?

A: Yes. The \$38.8 million will fund state and local shares for pay-for-performance. It also includes state-paid employer benefits, such as PERSI and FICA. Districts will not have to spend any local funds to fund any portion of PFP that is going to be distributed. The money is all coming from the state.

Q: My district opted for using the state model for our district standards for PFP. The column that is titled "total shares" shows in numerous cases that individual teachers should receive two shares. I assume that is a function of using the state model and that we need to cut that in half. Are we correct?

A: No. That is what you should be seeing in the total shares column if you're a district that has gone with the state plan as your local plan. Because you defaulted to the state plan, the state plan is also your local plan. Whatever a teacher earns on the state side is what they will earn on the local side, so the total combined is two per teacher. Principals can earn up to two state shares under the law, but they do not earn a double local share. So if you've got a school that is a full state share school and you defaulted to the state plan, what you'll see is two total shares for each of those full-time employees of the school. And then, for your principal, you will see two state shares and then one local share. Because we basically cut the local share in half to get it back down to the same maximum of one scale for local shares that everybody is under. So, they would have a total of three combined shares, or total shares.

Q: If someone was coded incorrectly, can that be revisited through this appeals process?

A: Yes. You can upload a May 2012 corrected upload and that will be pulled into the core database, and the SDE will change the information that is displayed.

Q: Do all changes need to go through an ISEE Report?

A: Yes

Q: Do we need to formally request all documentation of how calculations are completed, or will the SDE provide that information online?

A: At the present time, that level of detail is not provided online, but we will work to make information available, including the formula the SDE used in making these calculations.

Q: Will the local share amount equal the same amount as the state share?

A: No. It is a two-step process to calculate the amount of a share. The first step is to look at how many state shares were earned across the whole state. Then, the SDE will divide that total state shares into the \$38.8 million total money available from the Idaho Legislature. That determines the value of a state share for the purposes of allocating this money among districts. You can look at how many state shares were earned in your district and multiply them by the value of the state share for the purposes of step one. That will determine what amount of funding your district will receive from the state. The next step

is once we have established what each district will receive, we figure out what the total combined shares are in your district for state and local. We add state shares earned by each employee to the local shares earned by each employee. You will see that in the “total” column. If you are a school district that defaulted to the state, that information is already there. Under Idaho’s statewide pay-for-performance plan, an individual must earn at least a fraction of a state share and a fraction of a local share in order to get a bonus, so if they have a zero in either the state or local column, their total shares will show as zero. The SDE has developed a system that will calculate for you the combined shares for each individual in each district. Then, we divide that total combined share number into the total amount of funding your district has received to determine the value of a combined share in your district. This figure is then multiplied by each person’s total shares to determine their individual bonus.

Q: My school district does have a school that made AYP and that was a Four-Star school but does not seem to have made PFP.

A: The AYP calculations and the Star Rating calculations are different than PFP calculations. There is a certain amount of overlap in the calculations with the Star Rating because we are looking at the growth percentile, but it’s not going to be the exact same.

Q: Does a growth quartile of “one” equate to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a share?

A: You can actually see on the very front page of the PFP preliminary data webpage, there is a table there that tells you how many state shares are earned based on where a school is at in terms of its combination of growth quartile and excellence quartile. Here is the table:

STATE SHARES QUARTILES TABLE

		Excellence Quartile			
		1	2	3	4
Growth Quartile	1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	2	1.0	.75	.50	.50
	3	.75	.50	.25	.25
	4	.50	.25	0.00	0.00

Q: When will this information be made public?

A: Right now, the SDE is handling the preliminary PFP data the same way the SDE handles the preliminary AYP data. We will not release data until after the appeals window has closed and final calculations have been made. We must ensure the data is accurate, and we have given every school and district the opportunity to validate the information. According to the current timeline, we will release this data in November before the distribution is made to local school districts.

Q: Why are administrators showing double the teachers’ shares?

A: That is the way it is written in Idaho Code. Principals and administrative staff in the school – principals and assistant principals – earn double state shares. They do not earn double local shares, so they can earn up to two state shares and one local share. Their maximum combined is three total shares, as compared to instructional staff that have a maximum of two combined total shares.

Q: What's the maximum amount an employee can earn?

A: The law does not provide for a maximum or a cap, so it will depend on how much each individual earns after the state calculates state and local shares.

Q: For clarification, a building must qualify at the building level with state data, is that correct? In other words, district money can't be spread to buildings if the building did not meet the criteria?

A: Yes, that is correct. Idaho Code states that employees must earn at a least a fraction of the state share and at least a fraction of the local share in order to receive a bonus. If an employee is in a school with zero state shares or has earned zero local shares, that individual will not receive a student achievement bonus.

Q: When could this information be communicated to teachers?

A: Each district will need to consider this individually. However, please take into account that this is preliminary data, and the data could change through this 30-day appeals process. We purposefully built a timeline into the original law to ensure we had the time necessary to calculate this data accurately. The last thing we want to do is tell someone they earned a bonus only to find out that has changed through the appeals process. Even one appeal could change the data for multiple districts.

Q: How do I access my district or school-level data in ISEE?

A: Please see the attached PDF for directions on how to log in. This was also e-mailed to all superintendents.

Q: Has any thought been put into including paraprofessionals in this compensation?

A: Yes. Superintendent Luna proposed additional funding in his FY2014 budget request to include building-based classified staff in the PFP plan.

Q: How are assistant principals treated? Do they get double shares also?

A: Yes. They are treated the same as principals.

Q: Where do I get the data on which quartile my school is in?

A: If you are in the application, under the district, and then you click on schools, you can see the School ID number. So it would be the School number, then the actual school name, and then the next column over is the growth rank. That is where, out of all of the schools in the state of Idaho, where your school ranks. And then the next column gives you your growth quartile.

Q: Do local school districts earn shares, or just buildings?

A: The state does not calculate PFP at the district level. The calculations are all school-based.

Q: If a teacher was on contract for the first half of the year, but not part of the May upload, will they earn any portion of the PFP?

A: This will be up to each local school district to decide. The state will provide funding for the teacher who was included in the May upload. If you would like to make an adjustment on your end or in your

payroll, you have the local control to do that as long as you can justify that the bonus should be pro-rated for the two teachers who both served in that one role.

Q: I know the funding for PFP does include state-paid employee benefits? Does it include other benefits, too, such as sick leave or workers compensation?

A: In accordance with Idaho Code 33-1004f, we are directed to pay the employer's share for Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho (PERSI) and Social Security. This question has come up over the years with salary-based apportionment, and the state has not distributed anything but those two components. If we were going to include benefits other than PERSI or Social Security, it would require a change in law.

Q: How will the SDE help local districts calculate local shares?

A: After the 30-day appeals process has ended, the SDE will need data on the local shares earned by each of the employees in your district, based on how they performed on your locally developed plan. Once that data is submitted into our system, it will calculate state shares and local shares for you to figure out what a combined share is worth in your district, and how much each employee should be paid.

Q: How do you treat half-time employees, such as a half-time principal in a building or an athletic director who also teaches part time?

A: The shares that you earn end up being multiplied against your FTE status. If it's a full-share school, but you're a half-time employee, then you end up earning half of a share. The system the SDE has built will multiply the shares that are earned in that building against the FTE status of all of the people in that building.

Q: What happens to the \$38.8 million for PFP if people earn shares on the state side but not the local side? Will that money still be distributed?

A: Yes. The \$38.8 million will be fully distributed. It is distributed to local school districts based on state shares. The local shares, as part of the total shares figure, will then help determine how much individual employees in each local school district earn from the funding their district receives for pay-for-performance.

Q: Does the certified FTE include individuals who are paid from external funds—Title 1 or other federal funds?

A: Yes, it includes everyone.

Q: If I need to make corrections to my district's May upload, is the site still open to make those corrections?

A: Yes, you will go through the exact same process that you currently use for any of your corrected uploads. You will upload in the Test SRM section. You would then want to notify your original tech coordinators so they can take it from there and make sure that that information does replace what is currently in Core for your May upload.

Q: I have noticed some differences in assignment codes between the V2 rules and the V3 rules.

A: The SDE will make sure that the version 2 assignment codes are out there and all of the rules as they are put into the production from our side will be applicable of what those rules were in place in May of 2012.

Q: According to our preliminary data, our teachers associated with our alternative programs were not included in the FTE shares. Is that correct?

A: Alternative schools are listed separately. The only anomaly to that is if you are an alternative program actually rolled into or if the students took ISAT tests and the AYP was calculated at a different school. In that case, all of that would roll into schools in which that student was associated with for their excellence and growth.

Q: Is there any chance that the state shares a district earns on this preliminary report could change even if that individual district did not appeal?

A: Yes. Even if your district does not submit appeals, your district's data may change based on the appeals others have submitted. Any appeal or change could shift the quartile cut points. That is why this data is preliminary, and we are not releasing it publicly.

Q: Is it correct that an individual teacher can only earn one state share in total?

A: Yes, that is how Idaho Code is set up.

Q: In reviewing the data for my district, I noticed that the district's growth FTE and excellence FTE were the exact same number. Is this a coincidence?

A: No, it is not a coincidence. They should be the exact same number.

Q: Will school districts be able to see a complete breakdown of quartiles and where all schools in the state of Idaho currently rank in those quartiles?

A: Yes, we have not yet released that since we only have preliminary data at this point. The SDE does plan to release it once the data is finalized.

Q: How are growth and excellence calculated?

A: See the "Calculating Student Achievement Ranking Schools by Achievement" and the "Guide to Pay-for-Performance Median Student Growth Percentiles" documents online at <http://www.studentscomefirst.org/performance.htm>.